

of the Senate on Thursday, September 14, 1995, for purposes of conducting a subcommittee hearing which is scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. The purpose of the hearing is to consider S. 1014, to improve the management of royalties from Federal and Outer Continental Shelf Oil and gas leases, and for other purposes, and S. 1012, to extend time for construction of certain FERC licensed hydro projects.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, September 14, 1995, at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, TECHNOLOGY, AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology, and Government Information of the Committee of the Judiciary, be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on September 14, 1995, at 2 p.m. to consider the Ruby Ridge incident.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

THE DEBT COLLECTION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1995

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, on Tuesday, I introduced the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1995, S. 1234, that would reduce the Government's budget deficit by billions of dollars by clamping down on the huge amount of unpaid debts to the Federal Government.

The Government makes thousands of loans and guarantees thousands more. Most citizens, businesses, and organizations pay those loans back. Some fall on difficult times and simply cannot pay. Some could pay, but they do not do so for one reason or another. This is unacceptable. We must act to increase the Government's efforts at collecting bad debts so that law-abiding taxpayers do not have to bear this burden.

The United States has \$67 billion in delinquent taxes and \$49 billion in other types of delinquent receivables, most from loans and guaranteed loans. And, nontax debts have grown by nearly a quarter, \$9 billion, over the last 5 years. Generally, those in the debt collection field assume that 90 percent pay in a timely manner. Seven percent pay late. And 3 percent become seriously delinquent. This amendment does not impact a person who is up to 90 days late in making payments. It is aimed at the seriously delinquent.

We must become more systematic, diligent, and aggressive in seeking pay-

ment. Clearly, the worst way to solve an unpaid debt is to not push for repayment of outstanding funds. Yet, the Federal Government is not nearly aggressive enough in going after unpaid debts.

In conjunction with the administration, Congressman HORN of California and Congresswoman MALONEY of New York introduced similar legislation last month. I want to thank Congresswoman MALONEY for all her help in working with me on this important measure. She has years of leadership on improving Government collection of outstanding debts and has conducted a significant study of the levels of delinquent debt earlier this year. My proposal is based on their measure, but I have made a number of modifications to enhance the Government's ability to recover outstanding payments. For example, this measure clarifies the Federal Government would collect debts owed to States where there was a Federal financial interest and it would help to collect delinquent court-ordered child support payments. Failure to pay child support often results in the custodial parent and the children unnecessarily falling into the welfare system.

What does this bill require? The Department of the Treasury would act as a central collection agency for nontax debts as well as performing their current role regarding tax related debts. Other agencies would refer debts over 90 days in arrears, with a few exceptions, to the Treasury Department. Exceptions include cases where an agency is already in litigation for foreclosure on property, where the case has been recently turned over to a private collection agency within 90 days or when the loan is scheduled to be sold within 90 days. There is also an exception for specific loans or loan guarantees that may be collected after the 90-day period under terms set out in specific statutory authority. The original agency could continue its own efforts to collect the delinquent debts.

The Treasury could collect unpaid obligations by offsetting Federal payments going to the person or entity. In the case of government salary or other non-means tested income checks, up to 15 percent could be garnished. Veterans payments would be exempt and the Secretary of the Treasury would be able to grant additional, but very limited, exceptions. The Treasury would also pursue a wide variety of traditional efforts to collect debts:

Private attorneys and debt collection agencies could be hired to locate hidden assets;

In order to avoid cumbersome legal statutes, the Federal Government could use administrative rather than judicial foreclosure procedures, as private creditors can now do, to foreclose on property;

Persons in default would not be able to receive new loans or loan guarantees from the Federal Government with some exceptions; and,

Payments on Federal debts would be reported to credit bureaus so those who pay and those who do not will get the credit rating that they deserve. Where a debt could not be collected, the Treasury would notify the Internal Revenue Service. Under current law, a bad debt which is written off is considered to be taxable income to the borrower. Hopefully these provisions will be added incentive to not put the Federal Government to end of the list when payment checks are being made out.

This proposal provides appropriate notice and preserves everyone's due process rights. It simply says, if you owe, you should pay. Taxpayers shouldn't be left carrying the load of those who choose not to honor their obligations.

As we move to balance the budget, it would be unfair to increase Medicare costs or cut college loans while not doing what we can to collect over \$100 billion in unpaid debts.

I urge my colleagues to review this proposal. I think they will see it is a commonsense plan worthy of their support. •

SIERRA GRANDE HIGH SCHOOL

• Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, too often the only thing we hear about the youth of our country is that they do not care about anything but themselves. A tiny little school of 348 kids in the San Luis Valley of Colorado proves that statement is untrue. Friday, September 15, is their homecoming and the students of Sierra Grande Schools have chosen to celebrate their citizenship of this country by having the theme: "Land of the Free, Home of the Brave."

The Panthers of Sierra Grande will have their football and volleyball games—hopefully being victorious—but the big moment of the day will not be the games or dance or bonfire or crowning of the royalty, it will be when the school dedicates a 65-foot flag pole and a 20 by 30 foot garrison flag trumpeting the allegiance to this great country of this school and the communities of Fort Garland and Blanca that it represents. With the 14,000 foot Mount Blanca in the background, the flag will be a reminder to all who pass the school that patriotism and pride in our country is alive and well in the San Luis Valley.

After the singing of the Star Spangled Banner and the raising of the flag, a group of four Colorado Air National Guard jets will fly over the field breaking the silence of our memory of the POWs and MIAs who gave precious life that the students might receive and enjoy the gift of democracy.

The students of Sierra Grande are to be congratulated for their reminder that there are still those who cherish the ideals of freedom and democratic choice. •